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TWARDOWSKI & REPRESENTATIONALISM

1. INTRODUCTION

My task in this paper is twofold.¹ On the one hand, I want to provide an account of Twardowski's treatment of *content*, as can be found in his book *Zur Lehre vom Inhalt und Gegenstand der Vorstellungen* (1894).² On the other hand, I wish to make a suggestion about the kind of representationalist Twardowski was. Presenting what I take to be Twardowski's view from the perspective of what has come to be called the philosophy of mind, and particularly from the perspective of perceptual theory, I will argue that Twardowski's representationalism was in one important respect not the kind of representationalism often (if perhaps erroneously) attributed to Descartes; Twardowski's representationalism does not amount to what I will call *proxy-percept representationalism*. But Twardowski's theory was in another important respect a descendant of the Cartesian view. Twardowski conceived representational content as the principal means of our representation of extra-mental objects: it is in virtue of their content that representations represent, both perceptually and conceptually. Many traditional, though certainly not all, representational theories stake such a claim. Twardowski additionally assumed that at least some contents have what we now call phenomenal properties. And Twardowski construed the having of such properties in an unusual, mereological way. I will devote most of my attention to motivating Twardowski's theory. In conclusion I will provide a defense

of the theory, but even there my "defense" will simply be a straightforward appeal to the interpretation on offer: content, as construed by Twardowski, is not merely a means of representation, but is supposed to resemble objects mereologically. I want to try to get a better understanding of how Twardowski viewed this kind of resemblance.

Comparing Twardowski's view to Descartes' is not merely idle. While the *bête noir* of 20th Century philosophy of mind, Descartes remains a central (if unpopular) figure. In what particular ways does Twardowski's account resemble or fail to resemble (if not Descartes' actual treatment of *ideas*, then) the views most commonly attributed to Descartes?

Twardowski himself studied Descartes. Twardowski's doctoral dissertation *Idee und Perception* (1891) was a careful, forty-two page study of *clarity* and *distinctness*, and was devoted to analyzing the roles these concepts play in the Cartesian treatments of truth and judgment. These topics would become a central concern for Twardowski's own later work³, and his understanding of them may well have been influenced by his study of Descartes. So let me begin this brief reflection on Twardowski with a passage from Descartes:

And finally, even if these ideas did come from things other than myself, it would not follow that they must resemble those things. Indeed, I think I have often discovered a great disparity <between an object and its idea> in many cases. For example, there are two different ideas of the sun which I find within me. One of them, which is acquired as it were from the senses and which is a prime example of an idea which I reckon to come from an external source, makes the sun appear very small. The other idea is based on astronomical reasoning, that is, it is derived from certain notions which are innate in me (or else it is constructed by me in some other way), and this idea shows the sun to be several times larger than the earth. Obviously both these ideas cannot resemble the sun which exists outside me; and reason persuades me that the idea which seems to have emanated most directly from the sun itself has in fact no resemblance to it at all.⁴

In this passage, Descartes presents an argument to the effect that per-

ceptual ideas do not resemble the objects they represent. According to Descartes, when we perceive the sun we are caused to have an idea that is quite different from the one arrived at through “astronomical reasoning.” Nevertheless, the two ideas are of the very same object. Descartes supposed that they have different contents insofar as one makes the sun appear “smaller than the earth,” while the other represents the sun as being “several times larger than the earth.” It is from this difference (in content) that Descartes concludes that it could not be that both resemble the sun. And it is from this difference (in content), coupled with further “reason,” that Descartes concludes that at least one of the ideas “has in fact no resemblance to it [the sun] at all.”

However, despite what Descartes says, it is not at all obvious that it could not be that both ideas resemble the sun. In particular we should not jump to this conclusion merely because one of them makes the sun appear smaller and the other represents the sun as several times larger than the earth. At the very least it is not “obvious” without a more precise definition of resemblance. We must ask: how exactly must an idea match its object in order to resemble it? And we need not press the question about how the matching is to be determined in order to see that the theory would be in deep difficulty even if the Cartesian argument against it had been significantly stronger. I will, presently, take the important lesson to be the following: the representation of size is only one (and not a particularly useful) metric for resemblance. Many things resemble despite dramatic differences in their representations of size. Two different likenesses might each resemble a person, for example, despite the fact that one of them represents the person as being somewhat fatter, or having a somewhat bigger nose. So the real question arises: if not represented size, what would be a good criterion for resemblance? On Pitt’s (2000) account:

Like Descartes, few representationalists these days have much truck with resemblance. It is a traditional assumption among realists about mental representations that representational states come in two basic varieties (cf. [Boghossian 1995](#)). There are those, such as thoughts, which are composed of concepts and have no phenomenal (“what-it’s-like”) features (“qualia”), and those, such as sensory experiences, which have phenomenal features but no conceptual con-

stituents. . . . Some historical discussions of the representational properties of mind (e.g., [Aristotle 1984](#), [Locke 1689/1975](#), [Hume 1739/1978](#)) seem to assume that nonconceptual representations — percepts (“impressions”), images (“ideas”) and the like — are the *only* kinds of mental representations, and that the mind represents the world in virtue of being in states that *resemble* things in it. On such a view, all representational states have their content in virtue of their phenomenal features. Powerful arguments, however, focusing on the lack of generality ([Berkeley 1710/1975](#)), ambiguity ([Wittgenstein 1953](#)) and non-compositionality ([Fodor 1981](#)) of sensory and imagistic representations, as well as their unsuitability to function as logical ([Frege 1918/1997](#), [Geach 1957](#)) or mathematical ([Frege 1884/1953](#)) concepts, and the symmetry of resemblance ([Goodman 1976](#)), convinced philosophers that no theory of mind can get by with *only* nonconceptual representations construed in this way.⁵

Think of this encyclopedic account as the obituary of resemblance representationalism. I do not intend to dispute Pitt’s claims in any direct or systematic way. Instead I would like to highlight a few of its presuppositions, particularly those relevant for our thinking about resemblance as criticized by Descartes above, an appreciation of which will benefit our understanding of Twardowski. First, it is commonly assumed that there are two basic kinds of representations: those with phenomenal features, and those without phenomenal features. A second common assumption is often less explicitly articulated: those representations without phenomenal features are supposed to be paradigmatically conceptual, and those with phenomenal features are supposed to be non-conceptual, hence the significant debate in contemporary philosophy of mind concerning whether there are any wholly non-conceptual representational contents. Third, resemblance is presumed to be particularly associated with so-called “traditional” theories of representation, and particularly with accounts of representational content that attribute it phenomenal qualities. According to David Pitt, it is because of their phenomenal qualities that representations were traditionally thought to resemble, and it was because of their resemblance to extra-mental objects that that they were thought to represent them.

So how does this inform our interpretation of Twardowski? For one thing, Twardowski's account of the representation of objects by content is also based on the notion of resemblance. The point that I will argue below, however, is that the kind of resemblance Twardowski had in mind, while it did require that content have phenomenal qualities, is nevertheless immune to many of the "powerful arguments" referred to by Pitt above. I do not aim this discussion at establishing that point exhaustively, but I will explain why at least two of the most famous arguments against resemblance, arguments provided by Goodman against the reflexivity and symmetry of resemblance, do not work against a theory like Twardowski's.

2. REPRESENTATION AND TWARDOWSKI'S DISTINCTION OF CONTENT FROM OBJECT

The biggest influence on Twardowski's thought was not Descartes', but Brentano's. The most important thesis Twardowski inherited from Brentano is the foundational role he ascribed to *Vorstellungen*. So a crucial task in assessing Twardowski's theory is that of determining what he himself meant by '*Vorstellungen*.' Reinhardt Grossmann discusses the issue in his introduction to *On the Content and Object of Representations*:

The crucial German term is '*Vorstellung*.' This term has a corresponding verb and allows for such expressions as '*das Vorgestellte*.' From a purely philosophical point of view, the best translation of '*Vorstellung*' is, in my opinion, the word 'idea.' But there is no corresponding verb in English, nor can we easily translate '*das Vorgestellte*.' I have therefore followed the common practice and translated '*Vorstellung*,' not by 'idea,' but rather by 'presentation.' But I have done so with some misgivings; for this translation destroys some of the philosophic flavor of the text. It fails to stress that the *Vorstellungen* of the German (Kantian) tradition are the ideas of the British (Lockean) tradition.⁶

The point is not merely a matter of translation. Recent scholarship has distinguished a distinctively Austrian tradition of analytic philosophy, including the philosophy of the Brentano School, from the German tradition inaugurated by Kant.⁷ And despite awkwardness in phrases like

"ideating" and "the ideated," Grossmann's preferred rendering would emphasize the heritage of Twardowski's concept by reminding us of its connection with the "ideas" of the British (Lockean) tradition, and thereby more vividly indicating its connection with Descartes. Nevertheless, following the Kant literature, I will adopt the term 'representation' instead. The advantage of this is an understanding of *Vorstellungen* in a sense not identical to, but directly relevant for, representations as referred to in our contemporary psychology and cognitive sciences. That said, Twardowski's *Vorstellungen* should not be understood in the tradition of Kant, Fichte, and Hegel, but instead as an intermediate conceptual form between the *ideas* of the Early Modern tradition and *representations* as we understand them today. Ultimately, we must think of Twardowskian *Vorstellungen* as representations because (unlike other members of the Brentano School) Twardowski explicitly treated the contents of *Vorstellungen* as "mental copies" of extra-mental objects, and as "the means by which objects are represented."⁸

Twardowski believed that the term 'representation' [*Vorstellung*] harbored a deep ambiguity. On Twardowski's view, the Brentanian phrase "represented object [*Vorgestellte Objekt*]" is sometimes used to refer to extra-mental objects, i.e. objects properly so-called, but sometimes also used to refer to mind-dependent contents of representations. And that distinction constitutes an important point of divergence of Twardowski from Brentano who, in his *Psychology From an Empirical Standpoint*, used the terms 'content' and 'object' as synonyms.⁹ Twardowski followed Höfler and Meinong in proposing that the term 'object' refers principally to the extra-mental objects of representation, and following Brentano (or so he thought) proposed to retain the term 'content' as a synonym for "immanent object," or "intentionally nonexistent object," or their synonyms, all of which were supposed to refer to something mind-dependent. Twardowski took up the central thesis of Brentano's psychology, emphasizing the foundational role *Vorstellungen* play in consciousness, and added to it the distinction between the mental content [*Inhalt*] of representations and the extra-mental object [*Gegenstand*] of representations.

Accordingly, one has to distinguish the object at which our representation is "directed," from the immanent object [*immanenten Objekt*] or the content of the representation.¹⁰

The content of representation is defined by Twardowski as an “immanent object.” By “immanent” I take him to mean dependent upon a particular mental act. An advantage of this interpretation is that it sidesteps some of the difficulties involved in interpreting “internal existence” or “existence solely within the mind,” difficulties frequently discussed in Brentano scholarship. The distinction neatly tracks our commonsense notion that the contents of representations (whatever they might be and however they might be distinguished) belong to the same basic ontological category as the acts of representation themselves (whatever they might be and however they might be distinguished), whereas the objects of representations have no particular propinquity with the mental. In distinguishing content from object in this familiar way, i.e. by defining the former as mind-dependent and the latter as (in many cases) extra-mental, Twardowski taps into a deep realist intuition: that the objects of the world must be sharply distinguished from our representations of them, including the content of our representations of them, because those objects may be ontologically unlike their mental representations, including the contents of those representations.

Twardowski did more than merely take over this roughly Cartesian distinction. He also based this distinction on an analysis of an even more general referential ambiguity in the modifiers of noun phrases. Twardowski argued that ambiguity in Brentanian phrases like “represented object” and “immanent object” were themselves examples of the conflation of two different, broadly logical, functions of noun phrase modifiers.¹¹ Noun phrase modifiers can be adjectives, adjectival phrases or clauses, or other nouns (especially those in the possessive case). The logical function of such modifiers is sometimes to designate a subcategory of the things that would have been picked out by the noun-phrase without the modifier, i.e. sometimes the modifier is used to *determine* a particular kind of thing otherwise designated by the noun-phrase that it modifies. But sometimes it is used to make the original noun-phrase designate an entirely different category of thing than would have been picked out without the modifier, i.e. it *modifies* (even more) the reference of the noun phrase. In Twardowski’s lingo, such modifiers function as *determining adjectives* or *modifying adjectives*. Compare ‘14 carat’ in the phrase ‘14 carat gold,’ with ‘fool’s’ in the phrase ‘fool’s gold,’ or compare the classificatory function of ‘pickup’ in ‘pickup truck’ with ‘toy’ in

‘toy truck.’ Twardowski’s favorite example of a determining adjective was the ‘true’ in ‘true friend,’ as opposed to the modifying adjective ‘false’ in ‘false friend.’ According to Twardowski, a true friend is a special kind of friend, but a false friend is no kind of friend at all.

The important point for the philosophy of mind, according to Twardowski, is that this unrecognized referential ambiguity lies at the source of many more specific ambiguities in technical phrases like ‘represented object’ and ‘immanent object,’ as could be found in places like Brentano’s *Psychology From an Empirical Standpoint*. On Twardowski’s account, a “represented object” is no kind of object at all; it is a content. On Twardowski’s account, an “immanent object” is no kind of object at all; it is a content. In these cases the words ‘represented’ and ‘immanent’ are working as *modifying adjectives*.

3. PROXY-PERCEPT REPRESENTATIONALISM

Now consider a particular species of representationalism: *proxy-percept representationalism* is the doctrine that mind-dependent perceptual objects, what Twardowski called “contents,” and what our contemporary psychologists now frequently call *percepts*, stand in a representational relation to extra-mental objects or states-of-affairs, what Twardowski called “objects,” and what our contemporary psychologists now typically call the *distal stimulus*. Descartes has often been taken as a classic example of a *proxy-percept representationalist*. The grounds for saying so are passages where he defines an idea as “whatever is immediately perceived.”¹² But Descartes also demands that ideas serve as states, or acts, or modes of a finite mental substance. The cognitive faculty that Descartes called “the understanding” was supposed to have the function of presenting *ideas*; and it was supposed to present these either clearly and distinctly, or unclearly and indistinctly. In the 4th Meditation he argues that human error, including perceptual error, involves making an unwise judgment, i.e. being willing to assent to the material truth of an *idea* when it is perceived either unclearly or indistinctly. Most relevant for us here is the fact that on the Cartesian account it is *ideas* themselves that can be the objects of perceptual judgment. When we couple this thesis with the claim that the *ideas* are mind-dependent, we are then exactly two-thirds of the way to what I will define as *proxy-percept*

representationalism. The final claim necessary to meet the definition is that percepts somehow signify or represent distal stimuli. According to the orthodox reading of Descartes, the objects of perception are mental representations, and only on that basis can the skeptical question arise: how do we know that our mental representations are materially true?¹³

Proxy-Percept Representationalism:

- (1) x is the *perceptum* (i.e. the object of perception);¹⁴
- (2) x is mind-dependent;
- (3) x signifies an extra-mental object or state-of-affairs.

Whether Descartes was committed to (3) is surprisingly difficult to ascertain. There is an on-going debate about whether Descartes was a representationalist of the sort that I have defined in the paragraph above, or whether he was instead some kind of direct realist. For a relatively recent argument to the former effect see Hoffmann (2002, 163-79). For argument to the latter see Nadler (1989). My task here, however, is not to commit Descartes to *proxy-percept representationalism*, but instead to assess whether Twardowski was committed to it. Does Twardowski's treatment of content make him a representationalist in the latter sense? As I've already indicated above, if it does it cannot because he rejected (2). That, at least, is made clear by passages such as the following:

... the content in our sense, is not the same as the act. It does form together with the act one single mental reality, but while the act of having a presentation is something real, the content of the presentation always lacks reality.¹⁵

In what way, then, does Twardowski's theory advance upon the Cartesian account?

4. REPRESENTATION AND TWARDOWSKI'S PICTURE ANALOGY

When explaining the ambiguity of the expression 'the represented object' Twardowski appealed to a fruitful, but also potentially misleading, analogy. According to Twardowski, contents are to objects as pictures are to landscapes.

In comparing the act of presenting with painting, the content with the picture, and the object with the subject matter which is put on canvas – for example, a landscape – we have also more or less approximated the relationship between the act on the one hand and the content and the object of the presentation on the other. For the painter, the picture is the means by which to depict the landscape; he wants to picture, paint, a real or merely imagined landscape, and he does so in painting a picture. He paints a landscape in making, painting, a picture of this landscape. ... Analogously for presentations. A person presents to himself some object, for example, a horse. In doing so, however, he presents to himself a mental content. The content is the copy [*Abbild*] of the horse in a sense similar to that in which the picture is the copy [*Abbild*] of the landscape.¹⁶

This analogy is meant to make intuitive the proposed difference between content and object. Contents are not merely "immanent objects," abstractly construed; they are also copies of the objects. They are like little mental pictures of them. The picture theory is an old philosophical doctrine; it can be found in William of Ockham, for example, and probably dates back further.¹⁷ Twardowski's own terminology suggests an identification of his doctrine of content as "copy [*Abbild*]," with the traditional doctrine of the "mental picture [*geistige Abbild*]."¹⁸ However, despite Twardowski's appeal to the analogy, and despite his various references to content as a "copy," he was not ultimately committed to the claim that contents are mental images.¹⁹ Twardowski clearly repudiated the claim that contents are pictures, saying that such a claim rests upon a "primitive psychology."

A primitive psychology replied readily that the presentation (in the sense of the content) is simply a mental picture of the object and assumed that the question was thereby answered. ... However, whether it is to be assumed that there is a kind of photographic resemblance [*photographischer Aehnlichkeit*] between content and object is a question which receives nowadays generally a negative answer.²⁰

Instead, Twardowski followed his teacher Robert Zimmermann, and researchers like Benno Kerry, who judged content to be a kind of “sign”²¹. But does that mean that talk of “pictures” and “copies” in Twardowski’s work must simply be *façon de parler*, mere conceptual holdovers, relics from the days of the “primitive psychology?” That was, for example, Findlay’s interpretation, despite the prominence of pictures in Twardowski’s principal publication.²² But I think that there is more to the story. To see that there is something more going on here, recall that the basic function of metaphor is to express similarities between objects with one another. The basic function of analogies, on the other hand, is to express the sameness (i.e. the identity) of relations. If someone makes an analogy, for example that doctors are to human bodies what auto mechanics are to cars, you cannot prove that the analogy is weak by simply insisting that human bodies are not cars. To refute the weak analogy one must do something more, i.e. one must show that the *relata* in the analogical case are such that their *relationship* is wholly different from the relationship being suggested. Twardowski is not resorting to mere metaphor; he is deploying an analogy.

On my reading, the picture analogy is used by Twardowski to express precisely what he conceived as the relation between content and object, despite the fact that he did not treat contents as pictures. That is to say, the picture analogy was introduced by Twardowski as an analogy in the strict sense, the function of which is the expression of a precise relation. The relation in question here is a kind of depiction, or resemblance, even though neither of the two terms are themselves pictures. I don’t think that this interpretive claim is a particular stretch, philosophically, because we are already quite familiar with resemblances between things that are not themselves pictures, e.g. family resemblances. But I also think that there are lots of other resemblance-type relations, strict depiction included but not exhaustive for the category, that are not strictly-speaking the “picturing relation,” insofar as none of their *relata* are pictures.

The point is not meant to be earth shattering; nevertheless it puts me into substantive interpretive disagreement with J.N. Findlay. Reading again from *Meinong’s Theory of Objects and Values*, Findlay argues that because Twardowski rejected the thesis that contents are pictures, he thereby could not have held that the relationship between content

and object was one of resemblance.²³ But that does not follow, at least not on any interesting understanding of resemblance. Findlay cites exactly the passage that I’ve quoted above as evidence that Twardowski rejected resemblance for his account of the special relation between contents and objects. But Twardowski does not reject all forms of resemblance in the passage quoted above. Twardowski merely rejects, more specifically, a relationship of “photographical similarity.”

Let us consider again why the picture theory was attractive to “primitive psychology” in the first place. Representational content was construed not only as a symbol or sign, but as a simulacrum, a stand-in for an extra-mental object inside the mental domain. We are familiar with symbolic uses of pictures as representational tokens for things pictured. Pictures and pictured are frequently interchanged, a symbolic displacement that can occur despite stark differences in the material of which pictures and pictured are composed. For example, the little man with his foot slightly raised on a walk sign at an intersection stands in for people crossing that intersection at the appropriately coordinated moment. The people themselves, busy crossing the street, could not possibly be put into a sign. We need something else to stand for them doing what they are supposed to be doing at the appropriate moment, an indicator not made of flesh and bone but instead of white or green lights, for example. Likewise, the horse being “pictured” may have been flesh and bone, but its picture may be of paint and canvass, or ink and paper, or chalk and slate, perhaps even the stuff of consciousness (whatever that stuff might prove to be). The appeal for “primitive psychology” was this conduciveness of depiction to representational displacement; the pictorial representation is useful precisely because it can be realized in a variety of media. So long as we continue to insist that the mental and non-mental be sharply divided from one another metaphysically, the actual horse will not be able to get inside consciousness. And that’s what the mental pictures were supposed to be for.

However, we do not need pictures in order to perform the picturing function. If what is important for the representational displacement is the relation across the material media, then all that we need is the form that the picture and the pictured share. This was Twardowski’s advance on “primitive psychology.” There are many different relations that pictures share with things pictured, and hence many different pos-

sible kinds of depiction. But the one that Twardowski's analogy meant to express is the sameness of the relation of the parts of the content to the whole of the content, with some of the parts of the object to the whole of the object.

But as soon as there occurs an analysis of the object into its parts, and it is noticed that just as the object has certain parts, so the content of a presentation can be analyzed into constituents which correspond to the parts of the object, there appears immediately a new relationship between content and object. This relationship consists in this, namely, that the parts of the object are presented through constituents of the content in a way which is determined by the manner in which the parts of the object are united into a whole, uniform object. Hence there is an analogy between the composition of the parts of the object and the composition of the constituents of the content, an analogy, to be sure, of a rather peculiar nature, one which is determined by the relationship of being presented between an object and a content.²⁴

So the kind of depiction that is at the basis of Twardowski's representationalism is a shared mereological relation, i.e. the sameness of the relationship between parts of the content and the whole content, with some of the parts of the object and the whole object. We must be careful to notice here that Twardowski restricts his claim to only *some* of the parts of the object. It was not Twardowski's view that a content, no matter how sophisticated and rich it might be, could ever exhaustively represent an object in all of its relations to its parts. Objects always have too many parts for a content to represent them all, no matter how deeply resolved or elaborate the content's fineness of grain. The ideal of such a representation, one that represents everything about an object, is what philosopher's of the Brentano School called an *adequate representation*. But Twardowski, like his contemporaries, denied that there could ever be an adequate representation of an object. The immediate consequence of such a claim is that the parts of the object of any representation must be divided into two broad classes: those that have analogues in the parts of the content that represents the object of which they are parts, and those that do not. It was the former group

alone that Twardowski called *characteristics*.

5. TWARDOWSKI AND GOODMAN

What this means is that the special resemblance relation is, according to Twardowski, quite unlike other resemblances proposed in the history of philosophy. One consequence is that it does not fall victim to many of the standard criticisms of the "traditional" theory, for example, some of the criticisms made famous by Nelson Goodman in his book *The Languages of Art* (1976). The following quotation presents only the first pair of a panoply of arguments that Goodman mustered against the claim that resemblance is either necessary or sufficient for representation:

The most naive view of representation might perhaps be put somewhat like this: "A represents B if and only if A appreciably resembles B", or "A represents B to the extent that A resembles B". Vestiges of this view, with assorted refinements, persist in most writing on representation. Yet more error could hardly be compressed into so short a formula.

Some of the faults are obvious enough. An object resembles itself to the maximum degree but rarely represents itself; resemblance, unlike representation, is reflexive. Again, unlike representation, resemblance is symmetric: B is as much like A as A is like B, but while a painting may represent the Duke of Wellington, the Duke doesn't represent the painting.²⁵

The first argument is that resemblance is reflexive, but that representation is not. Therefore resemblance is not representation. Even if one were sympathetic with the conclusion of this argument one might still be suspicious of its soundness, if not by dint of the dubiousness of Goodman's claim that things resemble themselves, then at least because it confuses resemblances between things with resemblances between things, on the one hand, and their representations, on the other. Let us grant, for a moment, that a painting of the Duke of Wellington (for example) does not represent itself. Would we be any more inclined to say that it resembles itself? Goodman, at least, was inclined to say so. It would not be too much to interpret him, on the basis of this passage

alone, as claiming that for any object (and not merely a painting of the Duke of Wellington) the object resembles itself more than it resembles anything else. I take it that this is what he meant by saying that “an object resembles itself to the maximum degree.” But why should we agree to this claim? We should be reminded (as Twardowski would agree) that we need to give a more precise definition of resemblance, if saying such a thing is to be warranted.

Of course, I do think that things can resemble themselves, for example through time. But that should not be confused with the sort of resemblance that Twardowski was talking about. When we recognize the face of an old friend, even though that face may have changed, we are basing our recognition on the resemblance of a face that we see before us with a remembered face from long ago. But that is not at all the same as saying that the very same face resembles itself. In one circumstance Twardowski would say that we are comparing a content, i.e. the face that we now remember, with another content, i.e. the face of our friend as it is presently seen by us. And that is quite different from the question of whether the face presently before us does or does not in fact resemble itself now more than it resembles itself as it used to be. What is most important for Twardowski was that we not confuse either of those two different sorts of relationship with a third: the resemblance of the content (of what is either seen or remembered by us) to the actual object. So let us simply grant that objects resemble themselves “to the maximum degree,” and thereby that one sort of resemblance, i.e. the resemblance of an object to an object (itself) as conceived by Goodman, is reflexive. Does it follow that another sort of resemblance, i.e. the resemblance of contents to objects insofar as they share a form, e.g. as conceived mereologically by Twardowski, must also be reflexive? We cannot know the answer to that question without knowing more precisely what Goodman meant by resemblance. What is important for Twardowski’s theory is that a particular content, e.g. the face that I see before me now, resembles to some degree the face that is actually there. And that is what makes it a representation of that face. Goodman has given us no special reason to believe that the reflexivity, which (we have granted here for the sake of argument) characterizes resemblances of objects to one another, and to themselves “to the maximum degree,” also characterizes the particular resemblance re-

lationship between contents and objects as articulated by Twardowski. And unlike Twardowski, he seems to be conflating quite different kinds of relations.

The second argument is that resemblance is symmetric, and that representation is not, and therefore resemblance is not representation. But this argument clearly does not apply to Twardowski’s account of resemblance, because the resemblance relation defined above is asymmetric. Recall that for Twardowski, a content represents an object only if some of the relations between the parts of the object and the whole object are the relations between the parts of the content and the whole content. It is that particular feature of Twardowski’s theory that makes the relationship between contents and objects asymmetric. The contents represent the objects (but not vice versa) because all of their mereological relations can be found in the object (but not vice versa). This may indeed be a unique feature of mental representations, insofar as it seems impossible that any representational relationships between extra-mental objects (with one another) could ever possess this property. Nevertheless, it is this peculiarity of Twardowski’s theory, whether it ultimately recommends the theory or does not, that makes it quite impervious to Goodman’s symmetry argument.

6. CONCLUSION

In summary, Twardowski was a representationalist. For Twardowski, mental content is not, except when we are engaged in introspection, the object of an act of consciousness. Content is instead that through which the object is perceived, i.e. a means for representation. Despite similarities with Descartes in treating the contents of representation as mind-dependent, Twardowski treated contents (much more clearly than Descartes did) as signs for extra-mental objects. So, returning to the definition of proxy-percept representationalism, i.e.:

Proxy-Percept Representationalism:

- (1) x is the *perceptum* (i.e. the object of perception);
- (2) x is mind-dependent;
- (3) x signifies an extra-mental object or state-of-affairs.

We can safely conclude that if Twardowski was not a *proxy-percept representationalist*, it cannot be because he denied either (2) or (3). He affirmed both (2) and (3) quite directly. If Twardowski was not a proxy-percept representationalist it can only be because he denied that mental contents are perceptual objects, i.e. insofar as he had begun to shy away, like many 20th Century representational theorists, from (1). Twardowski was most unique, however, insofar as he treated contents as depicting their objects via shared “property relations,” defined mereologically. I am not particularly wedded to calling Twardowski’s account a kind of resemblance representationalism, but it seems to me fair to call it such, as long as one keeps in mind that he did not appeal (in any way, despite what Husserl said!) to pictures, and that his account of resemblance was asymmetric. In conclusion I would also like to point out that while contents of this sort can admit of phenomenal qualities, they need not have phenomenal qualities in order to resemble in this quite particular, Twardowskian way.

Notes

¹ This paper was originally read at a meeting of the History of Early Analytic Philosophy Society, at the American Philosophical Association Central Division, in Chicago on April 17th, 2008. I am indebted to the other participants, Robin Rollinger, Peter Simons, Arianna Betti, and to its organizer, Sandra Lapointe. I’m especially indebted to Professor Lapointe for her keen editorial assistance.

² Kazimierz Twardowski. 1894. *Zur Lehre vom Inhalt und Gegenstand der Vorstellungen: Eine psychologische Untersuchung*. Wien: Alfred Hölder. Translated as Kasimir Twardowski. 1977. *On the Content and Object of Presentations*. Reinhardt Grossmann (trans.). The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff. Subsequent quotation is of Grossmann’s translation, with my minor modifications. Hereafter abbreviated (Twardowski 1894/1977).

³ English translations of a variety of Twardowski’s papers are collected in (Twardowski 1999).

⁴ (Descartes 1641/1984), 27.

⁵ (Pitt 2000).

⁶ Reinhardt Grossmann, “Introduction” to (Twardowski 1894/1977), vii-viii.

⁷ See (Smith 1994), especially 1-5.

⁸ (Twardowski 1894/1977), 15-16.

⁹ Recent scholarship suggests that even Brentano felt the allure of a distinction along the lines Twardowski suggested. See Rollinger (this volume) on the distinction as it appears in Brentano’s logic lectures.

¹⁰ (Twardowski 1894/1977), 2.

¹¹ This discussion reproduces the one at (Twardowski 1894/1977), 11-17. Reading this as one of Twardowski’s most significant philosophical analyses, I follow (Wolenski

1998/99), 15-35.

¹² Eg., (Descartes 1641/1984), 127.

¹³ The Mediator of the 6th Meditation would endorse (3), for example, but the Mediator of the 1st Meditation endorses only (1) and (2). What I am calling “proxy-percept representationalism” is more often called “the veil of ideas,” which is a much better name for it, I admit (judged by evocative standards.) I beg readers’ pardon for using this uglier, somewhat more descriptive, name.

¹⁴ The “perceptum” appealed to here should not be confused with a *percept*, which combines both (1) and (2), and is thereby a particular kind of *perceptum*. As I am using the terms, a *percept* is a *perceptum* that is also mind-dependent. I have taken care to choose this more general (i.e. neutral) term, not only to avoid begging the question against the direct realist, but also to help illuminate (in the subsequent section of this paper) Twardowski’s particular brand of representationalism.

¹⁵ (Twardowski 1894/1977), 29.

¹⁶ (Twardowski 1894/1977), 15-16.

¹⁷ See (Ockham 1317/1990), 41.

¹⁸ He uses this language throughout (Twardowski 1894/1977); for a few examples see 7, 14, 16. He uses “*psychischen Inhalt*” synonymously; e.g., 16. Twardowski also uses the phrase “mental picture,” albeit less frequently and more hesitantly, sometimes within scare quotes, sometimes without. See, e.g., 7.

¹⁹ I have not been clear on this point in my earlier writings about Twardowski. See, for example, Hickerson (2005), 466-72, or Hickerson (2007), 49-54. I am grateful to Arianna Betti for making me see the point forcefully and friendlily.

²⁰ (Twardowski 1894/1977), 64.

²¹ See (Twardowski 1894/1977), 2, 7, 64-65.

²² See (Findlay 1963), 8-17.

²³ See (Findlay 1963), 8-17. Thankfully, we may not be completely at odds: Findlay leaves open the possibility, on 15, of a “shadow of resemblance.” But it is no mere shadow, I insist!

²⁴ (Twardowski 1894/1977), 65.

²⁵ (Goodman 1976), 3-4.

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